

ItchenValleyNews

Abbots Worthy, Avington, Easton,
Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy

Issue 144 | April 2026



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WELCOME

to the Itchen Valley News

Everything there is to say about the change from winter is best said by a poet! So here is John Clare:

'The Spring comes in with all her hues and smells/What charms does Nature at the spring put on/When hedges unperceived get stain'd in green/When even moss, that gathers on the stone/Crown'd with its little knobs of flowers is seen/And every road and lane, through field and glen/ Triumphant boasts a garden of its own/in spite of nipping sheep, and hungry cow/ The little daisy finds a place to blow/And where old Winter leaves her splashy slough,/the lady-smocks will not disdain to grow/And dandelions like to suns will bloom/Aside some bank or hillock creeping low/Though each too often meets a hasty doom/From trampling clowns, who heed not where they go.'

So our lovely Valley is emerging from the splashy slough, leaving plenty of pot holes behind (see page 28)! As the countryside changes from winter to spring, editing the magazine makes me think about our community, and how many opportunities there are for us all to meet – I think this is called social capital. I can pick a few examples, past and future – Martyr Worthy lectures, On the Way café, CAMEO, Brew with a View, E&MW Safari supper – and I am sure you can think of many others. A current example is the Lent lunches, with hosts kindly opening their houses to the community. As I write we have had two with two to come, nearly 100 people have had a bowl of homemade soup and we have already raised hundreds of pounds for the Winchester Hospice.

Some events that used to happen regularly have disappeared, but as long as community minded people ensure some old ones keep renewing and new ones keep appearing we will keep our community cohesive in a way that benefits us all.

Please keep reporting all the things you organise via the Itchen Valley News.

Enjoy the Spring, and look out for the article on nibbling sheep (page 20)!

Next month's editor is Catherine Hahn

Verity Coleman

Itchen Valley News

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Itchen Valley Churches

The Way of the Cross

Follow in the steps of Jesus
on his way to the cross

**10 - 11am Good Friday
3rd April**

We start at the bottom
of Church Lane, Martyr
Worthy and end at
St Swithun's Church.

Then delicious hot cross
buns and tea are served
for everyone in the
Village Hall opposite.

A wonderful start to
Easter for all the family.

visit www.itchenvalleychurches.org

What's On

**Full Parish Council Meeting
9 April at 7.00**

Easton Village Hall
See report on page 30

**Clean Green - Protect our
Streams!**

31 March, 8 April, 22 April 2026

Don't miss our forthcoming roadshows, coming to a Village Hall near you! Learn about the impact of everyday household cleaning products on our river, and how we can all make better choices. We'll be sharing recipes for non-toxic cleaning products that work. See a demonstration, and try making your own. Oh, and you get to go home with a goody bag!

Sign up at www.ticketsource.co.uk/

upper-itchen-restoration-cic

The roadshow is free, with a choice of three venues, see opposite page.

**Winchester Books Festival
17-19 April 2026**

winchesterbooksfestival.com

**Youth Bell Striking
Competition**

18 April 10am - 12noon

Look out for rings of bells around Alresford.

This is the Southeast England Youth striking contest on 8 bells with 8 to 10 teams competing. Rest assured, there will be no striking of youths, but the teams will be marked on precision ringing, how evenly the bells are struck, and for any errors in the methods or call changes they

'CLEAN GREEN - PROTECT OUR STREAMS'
ROADSHOW!

A local project to protect our chalk streams from household cleaning chemical pollutants and raise awareness of cleaner alternatives.

This event will be repeated on the following dates / locations.
Choose from:

Tuesday 31st March, 7pm, Cheriton Village Hall
Weds 8th April, 7pm, Bishop's Sutton Village Hall
Weds 22nd April, 7.30pm Old Alresford Village Hall

FREE EVENT all welcome! Book at:
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/upper-itchen-restoration-cic>

Recent studies show that many toxic chemicals are discharged into our chalk streams, where they build up and cause harm to river life. Household cleaning products contribute to this problem.

Be aware Use less Reduce chemical load



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At the Roadshow:

Talks – Learn how cleaning products work, and be aware of how toxins cause harm to river life.
Demonstrations & participation – Join our interactive activities.
Recipes for home-made 'river savers' for non-toxic cleaning – Take home product samples and a 'goody-bag'.



It has never been more important to act together to ease the stress on our streams, keeping them safer for river life and for future generations.

have chosen to ring.
While the teams are waiting to compete they will have the opportunity to ring at Old Alresford, and there will be some mini rings of bells around New Alresford that you are welcome to come and try. If you are inspired to learn how to ring please contact the Alresford school of Bellingring via <https://bellringing.co.uk>
Lindsay Cawte

The Annual Parish Meeting

23 April at 7pm

in Easton Village Hall
Talk on the M3 project followed by the formal meeting.
See report on page 30.



A Season to Sing: Alresford Community Choir and Clarendon Ensemble

Saturday 25 April at 7.30pm
St Johns Church, Alresford, SO24 9AG

Tickets from ticketsource.co.uk/alresford-community-choir
Sally Wesley 01962 776476

Celebration of Spring: Hampshire Medical Fund Wednesday 29 April from 6.30pm

Hospital of St Cross, Winchester
Drinks and canapes followed by performances from the Oscar Ellis Quartet, Cantores Episcopi and Farleigh School. In support of the Hampshire Medical Fund's work funding cutting-edge medical equipment for local NHS hospitals.
Tickets from



www.hampshiremedicalfund.org

On the Way Café

Saturday 2 May

Martyr Worthy Village Hall

All are welcome

Guitar Gala Night

Friday 15 May at 7.45pm

Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall

This May we are raising funds for play2, a youth guitar festival in Armenia that celebrates cultural exchange and enriches the musical lives of children through shared music-making. Your support will help ensure that every rehearsal and performance, involving more than 100 children, remains free for all participating children. The festival runs 6-13 July 2026.

Emily Telami



Book launch at Winch Book Festival

Friday 8 May 6.30-8.30pm

The Arc, Winchester.

Claire Fuller, who lives in the Itchen Valley, will be celebrating the publication of her sixth novel, *Hunger and Thirst*, in May and it's the first one to be set in Winchester. Inspired by Claire's time studying Sculpture at Winchester School of Art in the 1980s, this book, published by Penguin, is a spooky story about a young woman who accepts a terrible dare and is haunted for the rest of her life. Claire's previous novels include *Our Endless Numbered Days* which won the Desmond Elliott Prize, and *Unsettled Ground* which won the Costa Novel Award and was shortlisted for The Women's Prize for Fiction.

Tickets include a free drink, cake, the chance to win all Claire's previous novels as well as a copy of *Hunger and Thirst*, and some other goodies! Claire will be in conversation with Rebecca Fletcher followed by a Q&A with the audience. Copies of the book will be available to buy and get signed by Claire. Tickets:

winchesterbooksfestival.com/events/celebrate-the-launch-of-claire-fullers-new-novel-hunger-and-thirst/



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Alresford Art Society

Thursday 28 May at 7.30pm

Bishops Sutton Village Hall SO24
0AH.

A demonstration: 'The Humble Pencil'
by Ronnie Ireland

Non-members welcome, admission
£5.

Nikki Flannigan 01962 733031

www.artsociety.alresford.org

Save the Date

The Valley Gardeners

Tuesday 21 July at 5.30pm

Itchen Abbas and Avington Village
Hall

A talk by Nick Bailey of Gardeners
World

Further details with booking
procedure will follow.

Jane Hutchence

Easton and Martyr Worthy Cricket Club

Friday 24 July

The annual Easton Sixes Tournament

Sunday 2 August

80th anniversary celebration and
EMWCC v MCC fixture

Finger-Picking Good! - an evening with Henry Ayling

The magically atmospheric venue of St Mary's, Easton was the setting for a concert given by the talented guitarist and singer-songwriter, Henry Ayling. An attentive full-house gave the Winchester-raised Henry a warm reception at this fund-raising effort

for the church's renovations. Henry is the son of one of very our own villagers, Claire Fuller, who so efficiently produced the whole event. He has been a professional musician for five years, developing a finger-picking style exploring folk, blues, classical and jazz influences.

Henry's programme included his own arrangements of some of the most celebrated English folk tunes including *Scarborough Fair*, *Black is the Colour of My True Love's Hair* and *Sally Free and Easy* by Cyril Tawney, one of the luminaries of the English folk song revival of the 1950s. In a varied programme, he also gave us several of his own compositions, most memorably at his mother's specific request, *The Drummer* and also *Forever to Roam*, a song inspired by our beloved River Itchen. He demonstrated his considerable musicianship with his stylish arrangement of the classic 1959 Dave Brubeck hit, *Take Five*. And how should any self-respecting fingerstyle guitarist end his programme except with *Anji*, the iconic 1962 Davy Graham hit. The appreciative audience lapped it up.

The evening was both a cultural and financial success, with over £2,000 raised for the church. Thanks must go to Chris Ellis for managing the sound system so professionally and the many friends of St Mary's who helped.

Stephen Percy

Henry is available for gigs, parties, weddings etc and teaches both in person in Bristol and online. Further details from www.henryayling.com

Martyr Worthy lecture series 2025/6

It began with a throwaway suggestion from the late Joanna Lang: “how about organising a lecture to raise a little money for our Valley churches?” And so from small beginnings our now legendary Martyr Worthy Lecture Series began.

A memorable first committee meeting was held in lovely sunshine on the terrace of Meadows in Martyr Worthy, where I lived at the time. This meeting was the foundation of future ones, always with an agenda starting “Tea, CAKE and catch up “ before the serious items of planning and sourcing the lecturers. Starting with Joanna, Verity and myself, the committee is now led by Gilly Greenwood.

John Lang (now the IVN quizmaster!) gave the very first lecture, when he looked behind the scenes at the Jubilee Pageant on the Thames in the freezing rain. We didn’t realise at the start that this would be a long running enterprise and that the lectures would be held every two years, with three or four lectures in each series, since that first one in 2012. They have raised a

large sum to help finance the running of the Itchen Valley Parish. For the 2025/26 series which has just concluded four different evenings took us from human travel in Space to travelling round Great Britain’s coast, and from a fascinating staging of the downfall of Maggie Thatcher to an engrossing talk about the restoration, reconstruction and conservation of HMS Victory. Over four hundred tickets were sold, and with most of the expenses covered by welcome sponsorship from Savills, £10,000 was raised for the Itchen Valley Parish.

Liz Platt



I have drawn on a huge pool of willing local talent to ensure that the Martyr Worthy lecture series ran smoothly. Four residents suggested speakers, John and Rob provided reassuring IT support, and there were willing volunteers to help with flyers, canapes, the bar and the set up, not to mention the welcome in the car park and at the door. Thank you also to the organising committee, Verity Coleman, Scot and Sally Johnston and Sophie Parry. And most of all, thank you to everyone who bought tickets and came to support the cause and join the party.

Gilly Greenwood



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On the Way café 2026

On a day of glorious sunshine, the first 'On the Way' Café of the 2026 season was held on Saturday, 14 March at the Village Hall in Martyr Worthy.

Anticipating large numbers of attendees, the Café team set up more tables than usual outside, using every available chair in the Hall's supply. Bright red and white tablecloths and typically British bunting hung between the Hall and a tree nearby signalled both to regulars and passers-by that we were open for business after the winter break.

The team were thrilled by the turn-out, with approximately 75 guests served, and the baristas and tea-makers were fully occupied by a regular flow of orders while an array of delicious cakes (all provided by kind volunteer bakers) were consumed, so much so that only crumbs were left at the end.

The Café has resisted inflationary pressures and its offerings remain as affordable as ever. Most important, neighbours and friends were able to reconnect after a long, wet winter and



community bonds were strengthened through good company and good conversations. The next Café will be held on Saturday, 2 May from 10.30am to 12.30pm, as usual at the Martyr Worthy Village Hall, at which all will be welcome.

John Barber

Philip Windsor Aubrey in Texas



The Upper Itchen Valley Society is very pleased to unveil a memorial bench in honour of its past Chairman, Philip Windsor-Aubrey, in Texas Field, Martyr Worthy overlooking the Itchen Valley. The photo shows the bench being tested by Emily Windsor Aubrey.

Philip was Chairman of the Society from 1995-2007 and made a very significant contribution to its governance and fundraising and to its role in protecting the Valley.

UIVS is a charity, and covers Abbots Worthy, Avington, Easton, Martyr Worthy, Itchen Abbas, Itchen Stoke and Ovington. Established in 1970 around the time the M3 first came through our Valley, the charity's purpose is to protect all that is good

about the Upper Itchen Valley, in particular our environment, heritage and community.

In next month's News there will be an update on the new UIVS website, as well as further information on the Society, membership and a new grants programme.

Philip Wolfe, Chairman UIVS

Easton and Martyr Worthy Cricket Club

Members of the club's Management Committee have been working hard during the winter to upgrade the ground facilities for the benefit of both cricketers and village hall users. New steps have been installed to enable easier access to the cricket pitch, providing a better link between the scoring and spectating activities on the balcony, and the game on the pitch. It also reduces the need for players and supporters to encroach on activities taking place in the village hall at the same time as cricket is being played. The club is very grateful to the Roth family who have provided the funding for these new steps in memory of John Roth, the Club President who passed away in 2025. A ceremony to mark this event will take place with the Roth family on Sunday 2 August.

EMWCC is also very grateful to



Michael Gray for his support with improving access to the neighbouring field and revamping the grass mowings storage area at the south east end of the ground. Other work planned includes replacing the netting for the practice nets, and an electrical supply being connected to the club garages to provide light and re-charging for the electrical tools that the groundsman is now using.

As usual, the 2026 outdoor cricket season will begin in mid-April and will be busy from the start, as activities move from indoor preparation to outdoor training and playing. The Juniors' section continues to thrive under the dynamic leadership of Laura Skilton. There will be a cricket camp for U9s, U11s and U13s during the Easter holidays and volunteers from across the club have been undertaking winter training courses in preparation to become the next set of juniors' coaches.

Training and matches are scheduled throughout the week for different sections of the junior club and for its different age groups. Friday evenings will continue to be the popular social evening with the bar and BBQ open from 6pm starting on Friday 24 April. On the Friday the U7s Hoppers, U9s and U11s will all be training. Everyone is welcome to come along and watch all the junior activity, while having a drink or burger.

The senior section of the club will again be running three teams: the 1st XI and 2nd XI will play home matches at the David Roth cricket ground each Saturday (starting on 11 April - weather permitting) with a 1pm start. The 3rd XI will play at North Walls Recreation Ground, where Winchester City Council have built a new sports pavilion. and pitch improvement work is still in progress. Senior nets training is on

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Thursday evenings (6-8pm); please do come along if you are interested in playing cricket this summer at any level. Friendly warm-up matches have been arranged for Saturdays in April with the first League matches scheduled for 2 May. The Ladies' squad will train on Tuesday evenings and play their matches on Sunday afternoons.

2026 is a significant year for EMWCC; it is the Club's 80th Anniversary. A celebration will take place on Sunday 2 August in conjunction with the EMWCC v MCC fixture and the naming ceremony for the new John Roth steps. Please put this date in your diary; further news on the plans for the day will be released soon.

The annual Easton Sixes Tournament will be held on Friday 24 July.

For more information on any of the Club news please contact the team below:

Club Chairman: Adrian Lee
adriancjlee@outlook.com

Club Captain: Seb Stannard
seb.stannard@btinternet.com

Ladies' Captain: Charlie Gloyn
charliegloyn@icloud.com

Juniors' Organiser: Laura Skilton
juniors@emwcc.com

Press Officer: Lynda Gray
lgray453@aol.com

www.emwcc.com

Itchen Abbas School report

How wonderful to be seeing the sun and the first shoots of spring. This optimism and positivity has been very evident in school these past few weeks.

In February we marked Children's Mental Health Week, with all children



taking part in activities designed to help them understand their emotions, talk about their feelings and recognise the importance of looking after their mental wellbeing. It has been wonderful to see such thoughtful discussions and positive engagement across the school. Supporting children's mental health is vital in helping them feel safe, confident and ready to learn, and we are proud of the way our children embraced the week.

We were also delighted to welcome three Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Volunteers into the school, where the children took part in an engaging and informative session on CPR. Learning these potentially life-saving skills was both empowering and inspiring for the children.

We also welcomed a selection of our Governors to see the progress



children are making in their writing. They were genuinely stunned by the quality of handwriting, and the progress children have made this year.

Mr Barraclough and Mr Bogan took our EARA group to John Keble Primary School in Hursley to take part in our termly network meeting. Around twelve other schools were present, and our children bravely presented the work we have been doing at Itchen Abbas on pupil voice and belonging. They spoke confidently about their learning, and they should all be incredibly proud of themselves. They were wonderful ambassadors for our school.

This half term we also welcomed the Environmental Health Team from Hampshire County Council, who came to inspect our lunchtime food service. They were very impressed and awarded us a 5 rating. Well done to the Aspens team and to our new server, Mrs Bruce! We also celebrated World Book Day. The children looked amazing in their costumes and thoroughly enjoyed a workshop with our visiting author-



illustrator, Rose Lihou. She was very impressed with our children, and it was lovely to celebrate a talented local author on such a special day. We are delighted to be working in partnership with Superstar Sports, a highly regarded local, family-run provider, to run holiday courses here at Itchen Abbas Primary. Our next courses take place over Easter and the Summer Holidays – all children aged 4-12 are welcome, whether they attend Itchen Abbas Primary School or not. Bookings: superstarsportsuk.co.uk.
Sally Johnston



Book review

Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man, by Siegfried Sassoon

“Do you hunt much?” she inquired, evidently impressed by what she had overheard. Rather loftily I replied that I hunted whenever I got the chance, inwardly excusing myself with the thought that it wasn’t my own fault that I’d only had one chance so far...”

Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man, first published anonymously in 1928,

follows George Sherston, Sassoon’s lightly-fictionalised self, from his rather isolated but picturesque youth in the Weald of Kent to his first forays into fox-hunting and beyond. It’s the first in a trilogy of books, and whilst the second and third take poor Sherston into the First World War, this first instalment is full of warmth and humour as Sassoon lovingly recreates his days before the war.

Sassoon is well-known for his poetry, but he was also a masterful prose writer. Like poetry, his is the sort of writing that lends itself well to being read aloud. He took a lot of care over his words, and the fact that, whilst reading Sassoon’s/Sherston’s recollections of his days spent hunting foxes, I (a devout vegan, and someone

very much against fox-hunting) began to think that actually the sport might be quite lovely, is really a testament to this!

I read *Memoirs* a few years ago, but since I plan to re-read it soon, along with *The Old Century* (the first volume of Sassoon’s ‘un-fictionalised’ trilogy of memoirs, and also very good), in my excitement I have only been able to think of this book to review.

I should have prefaced this by saying that Sassoon is my favourite writer, and that I might therefore be slightly biased towards praising his work—notice how I’ve managed to sneak two of his books into this. But I very rarely re-read books (even my favourites), and the fact that I am re-reading this one should be your first indication of its magic! It’s a lovely reading experience, and, as Sherston is ‘inclined to loiter among’ the memories of his youth ‘for as long as possible,’ I too

am eager to return to them as soon as possible.

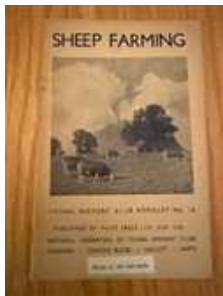
M. Lawrence



The illustration is of the cover design by William Nicholson. Catch the William Nicholson exhibition at the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester until 10 May
[Ed](#)

Sheep sagas Part 2

During my recent quest for sheep knowledge, Robert Stent from Park Farm showed me an amazingly preserved Young Farmers' Club Booklet from 1945.



This helped fill in the gaps about sheep farming today compared with his father's time, as did a visit to Avington Park estate.

Without grazing, chalk grass downland and its many old drove routes and floating meadows would not exist. Sheep act as lawn mowers and stop scrubland developing. The history of downland is inextricably linked with the history of farming. Extensive tracts of woodland were first cleared from the South Downs 6,000 years ago in the Bronze Age, and medieval sheep farmers grazed their flocks on the chalk grasslands, creating the conditions for wildflowers and butterflies to flourish. Many grasslands were ploughed up during World War II and never returned to their natural state. Chalk grassland now only covers 4% of the South Downs National Park. You may have walked along part of the National Park's northern boundary,

which runs along the old Watercress Line between Alresford and Kings Worthy. There are now 30,000 sheep farmers in Britain, with



grassland tenancy well established in the valley, as sheep farmers rent land off our local landowners. Most are on a large commercial scale, but there are some dedicated small sheep farmers, as in Easton and Martyr Worthy, and hobby herds, as at Avington Park. The value of a fleece is now only about 45p, yet it costs £2-3 to shear a sheep.

However, there are glimmers of hope recently that wool prices are making a comeback, reflecting a worldwide decline in sheep numbers and rise of eco-conscious shoppers choosing wool not products manufactured using manmade fibres. Buying wool products helps prevent pollution by reducing the making and shedding of manmade fibres into the environment. Also, recently better market prices for sheep meat has seen Hampshire bucking the trend of a decline in the national sheep flock. But has sheep farming really altered that much over time?

You may have noticed that our Valley sheep are constrained by electric and wire fencing not wattles and hedges, and trucks are used to move sheep to grassland 'leys' and turnip fields, or to market. There are certainly fewer people involved, as one full time shepherd may look after up to 2,500 sheep and quad bikes help the traditional role of sheep dogs.

You may spot 'blue backed' sheep, which is a sign of targeted parasite control by sprays that has largely replaced mass dipping. You will know Winchester's Cattle Market car park on Andover Rd, but perhaps not that the old abattoir was at the end of St George's St under Primark! These shut in 1989 and the 1950s respectively. Sheep now travel to market or abattoirs as far away as Somerset and Sussex. There is currently a petition by livestock producers to have a new

abattoir in Winnall.

New government Environmental Land Management schemes favour grassland leys and grazing rather than intensive arable monocultures. This follows some of the philosophy of Charles 'Turnip' Townshend's 17th Century system of rotating crops with turnip-eating sheep - a cornerstone of the Agricultural Revolution. Using sheep as organic fertilisers assists the move towards regenerative farming methods to improve soil biology.

There are now many more breeds that reduce the need for shearing, including naturally fleece shedding sheep, for example, the Wiltshire Horn. You might see their fleece blowing around fields and trapped in fences. As our climate changes, our best known native breed, the Hampshire Down, may be one of the breeds most resilient, because it can withstand our increasingly inconsistent weather patterns., and is known for easy lambing, fast maturing lambs and high quality meat. Bred by crossing older types in 1835, they can lamb for up to 8 years. Lambs go to market between 12-14 weeks old. Has the scene changed much since

Charles II and Nell Gwynne used to stroll around the Park? I was offered a site visit by the Avington Estate Manager, who kindly introduced me to the sheep you can see when passing by Avington Park's scenic pastures (see below). Peter Duggan-Rees charmingly, and patiently answered my barrage of questions about sheep heritage and husbandry. On entering the sheep field I was interrogated by Evander a female 'bellwether', boss of the flock. She is a 17 year old cross breed and one of the flock inherited from the Bullen family six years ago, when Nick Roach took over Avington. She certainly took a fancy to my clipboard!

This small flock of 25 ewes includes South Downs, Herdwicks, Whitefaces, Jacobs, and several crossbreeds, many over 15 years old. Hampshire Downs are gradually being introduced to the flock from the Easton flock owned by Mick Hayward.

Most other flocks in the valley are kept for commercial reasons, but Avington's sheep are pets. However, they are more than scenic moving



Avington Park and Evander's flock

statues, their role is focused on land management. They play an important part in keeping the grass short and, as selective grazers, they also help boost biodiversity. They are able to graze many of the estate's hard-to-reach areas, helping reduce costs and the soil compaction caused by heavy tractors and mowers, fitting into the model of regenerative farming. Also, there is no doubt that they are integral to the beautiful, immaculately kept, landscape at Avington. In early spring you will spot them grazing outside Avington Park in council owned areas.

How I became a Livestock Looker!

My last interview was with Andy Reeves, Reserves Officer for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT).

You may have seen the HIWWT's livestock on St Catherines Hill as well as in the valley, especially the iconic British White cattle. Currently Andy is in charge of the welfare of ten White Faced Woodland sheep at Abbey House, Rectory Lane. They are one of the six breeds on the Survival Trust's Red List, and particularly light footed, minimising soil erosion. The HIWWT chooses rare and traditional breeds of sheep and cattle for 'conservation grazing', to restore and maintain chalk grasslands. Interestingly, some of their fleeces are used for mulching new planting on St Catherine's Hill, because they add minimal nutrients. Gardeners will know about the need for 'cut and collect' especially if growing chalk meadow flowers. Sheep are the ideal tool for this as well as keeping a low sward which



encourages biodiversity. One square metre of chalk grassland may contain forty three different species of flowers and plants!

Andy is one of seven Rangers in the huge North and Central Hampshire area, and with so many small sites like Abbey House, as well as the larger ones like St Catherines Hill and Broughton Down, the HIWWT are always on the lookout for 'Livestock Lookers'. You may well see me rattling a bucket of nuts to check the friendly flock over when I can. If you fancy being on a rota, do contact Andy on 07825 213412. You may spot him in the summer checking the new Shetland cattle on the steep slopes of St Catherine's Hill.

Leads on!

The increase in countryside recreation and dog ownership have led to extra threats to farmers from sheep worrying. Sheep are easily stressed and in the spring many will be heavily pregnant or have lambed. From 2025, new legislation means dogs must be on leads near sheep and DNA and mouth imprints can be used to catch dog offenders.

Remember... If you see a sheep lying on its back it is 'cast' and may die. A gentle push will tip it back upright safely!

Whether you are a vegetarian/vegan or not, sheep have been and are, inextricably linked to our local economy, landscape and heritage. So, as you pass, gently and quietly, near the sheep in the valley, perhaps you can spot some of the 90 breeds kept in the UK.

<https://www.countryfile.com/wildlife/mammals/native-british-sheep-breeds-and-how-to-recognise-them>



April Church Services

Monday 30th & Tuesday 31st March, Wednesday 1st April

7pm - Compline - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Thursday 2nd April

7pm - Maundy Thursday – St John's, Itchen Abbas

Good Friday

10am - Way of the Cross - Church Lane, Martyr Worthy

Easter Sunday

10am - Family Communion - St Mary's, Easton

6pm - Songs of Praise – St Mary's, Avington

Sunday 12th April

8.30am - Holy Communion - St Mary's, Easton

10am - Morning Worship - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 19th April

8.30am - Holy Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

10am - All Age Worship – St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 26th April

10am - Parish Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

6pm - Evensong - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Please check our website in case of any unexpected changes:

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

Acknowledgements: Many thanks for the time and input from Robert Stent, Peter Duggan-Rees, Andy Reeves, Michael Gray, Mick Hayward, and John Venn. Thanks also to Peter Riches for painstaking proof reading!

Kim Adams

A Season of Renewal

There is something unmistakable about this time of year. Almost without us noticing, the world begins to stir again. The days grow longer, the air softens, and life quietly returns to hedgerows, gardens, and fields. Buds appear where there was only bare branch; birdsong grows stronger; the earth itself seems to breathe again.

It is no coincidence that Easter falls at just this moment. For Christians, Easter is the great story of renewal: the story of life emerging from death, of hope rising where it seemed all was lost. In the Gospel accounts, the resurrection begins in a garden, early in the morning, as light breaks into darkness. It is a deeply fitting image, because it mirrors what we see all around us.

The Bible often uses the language of nature to describe this renewal. In the New Testament, Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness” (John 10:10). And St Paul writes, “Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being, the old is gone the new has come” (2Corinthians 5:17). These are not just words about distant spiritual ideas — they are reflections of something we can glimpse each spring in the world around us.

Renewal is rarely dramatic. It is usually gradual, patient, and often unnoticed at first. A seed grows silently beneath

the soil long before it breaks through into the light. In the same way, renewal in our lives and in our communities often begins quietly — through small acts of kindness, fresh energy, or a new sense of purpose. This year, our village finds itself at just such a moment of quiet renewal. After Easter, we look forward to welcoming our new Rector David Cooke when he and his family will be joining us during the summer. That, too, is a kind of springtime — a chance for new beginnings, new relationships, and new growth in the life of our church and community.

A new Rector does not simply arrive with ready-made answers, but with the opportunity to walk alongside us, to listen, to learn, and to help nurture what is already good and growing among us. Just as a gardener does not create life but tends and encourages it, so too a new chapter in church life is something we all share in shaping. Perhaps this season invites us all to reflect: where do we see signs of new life in our village? Where might we play our part in helping things grow — whether through community, friendship, or simply taking time to notice and appreciate what we have?

Easter reminds us that renewal is always possible. Not just once, but again and again.

As the fields turn green and the days grow brighter, may we find in this season not only the beauty of the world around us, but also a renewed sense of hope for the life we share together — and for the new chapter we look forward to with David and his family among us.

Gerry Stacey

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My Home Made Better is a partnership of four Hampshire based charities, delivered in Winchester District by Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis (WinACC)



Easter Services in the Itchen Valley

30th, 31st March & 1st April

Compline

7pm at St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Thursday 2nd April - Maundy Thursday

7pm at St John's, Itchen Abbas

Friday 3rd April – Good Friday

Way of the Cross

10am at St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

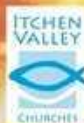
Easter Sunday

10am - Easter Parish Communion

St Mary's, Easton

6pm - Easter Songs of Praise

St Mary's, Avington



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Water Quality Monitoring on the Test, Itchen and Meon

The Upper Itchen Restoration CIC report on Water Quality Monitoring on our three local chalk streams was published last month. This is the result of nutrient testing by 60 dedicated volunteers, who have monitored their rivers for over two years of data.

We have found that the main issue is phosphate, which can lead to algae blooms like these in our naturally nutrient-poor chalk streams, as we have seen for several summers running now. Algae blooms deplete oxygen, smother habitats and, particularly when combined with sediment from run-off into the river, can harm or kill wildlife. On the Itchen, we find that 17 of 21 sites sampled would require reductions to meet Natural England targets for a healthy chalk stream.

Phosphate comes from run-off from fields and from human waste; it is also added to our drinking water. The report makes seven recommendations for regulators, water companies and agri/aqua culture. We will be launching a campaign on this shortly.

upperitchenrestorationcic@gmail.com

From our MP

Winchester needs an A&E for the long term. I'm fighting to keep the A&E at Royal Hampshire County Hospital open for the long term.

The Government recently confirmed it is spending public money to purchase land near Basingstoke for a

possible new hospital. A hospital that may not even be built at all, and if it is built, it won't be until the mid 2040s.

Our community deserves a fully functioning hospital in Winchester and not vague promises about new hospitals being built somewhere else decades from now. If ministers can find the money for speculative land purchases, they should certainly be able to invest in improving the hospitals patients and staff depend on. In Parliament, I will keep pressing the Government to guarantee funding for urgent improvements at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, so the incredible staff there can continue delivering the high-quality care our community deserves.

Last month, I wrote about the communities across the Meon Valley coming together to demand action from Hampshire County Council to stop people driving off road vehicles through stretches of the River Meon for fun, churning up the riverbed, damaging wildlife and degrading the ecosystem in the process.

I have now taken the issue directly to Westminster by securing a meeting with the Government to get to the bottom of this and push for action. I will be asking the Government to work with the County Council to ensure a Traffic Regulation Order is finally put in place to stop vehicles entering the river and protect the Meon from further damage.

If there is anything I can help you with, please get in touch at:
danny.chambers.mp@parliament.uk
Danny Chambers MP

Jackie's County Corner: the state of our roads



You tell me that that you spend more time looking at the road than at the traffic conditions, and you know that's dangerous.

You worry about the potholes that might ruin your car, the expense and the inconvenience.

If you are a cyclist or motorcyclist that hole could be lethal.

The County Council leader has said that ten times the money wouldn't solve the problem. But it surely doesn't have to be as bad as this?

This January the Government has rated all authorities for road condition: you can see the results at www.gov.uk/government/news/how-well-is-your-council-fixing-your-roads

The red, amber, green ratings are based on three key areas: the condition of local roads, how much local highway authorities are spending on road repairs and whether they are following best practice in maintaining highways. Hampshire



is rated amber.

Many of Hampshire's rural roads were constructed over old earth foundations. They deteriorate in the winter, caused by lack of timely summer maintenance, exacerbated by poor drainage undermining the foundations, eroding the edges as drivers pass by using the verges rather than waiting for a moment or having a convenient passing place. Since I started my County Corner (and I think this is about my 200th!) the County Council methods have changed, and I fear not for the better. We used to have teams covering much smaller areas and our local engineers knew the area 'like the back of their hand'.

I miss Ray, my local highway engineer. After a quick coffee in the kitchen with my list, we'd drive round the division and identify the work to be added to his list for immediate attention. Occasionally, he'd even get a spade out of his boot, we'd don yellow jackets and clear a drain! Ray and his colleagues covered smaller areas then: it meant less travel time, more work done by the team. Larger workbeats today may deliver cheaper contracts but seemingly are not so effective.

There used to be a scheme called Operation Resilience. Each road with multiple problems was tackled as one project. Op Res, as it was called, should be reinstated.

New materials have been developed using recycled road planings. Is there proof that these recycled materials stand up to the demands of modern traffic? The

HGV's we see on our roads today are much wider and heavier than vehicles of two decades ago. Even the tractors are bigger! Rural roads were not built to take them. Roads 'below a B road' could be marked as 'Not suitable for HGV's' to protect us all. Hampshire Highways could check every Utility Company's work for poor quality reinstatement. They only check a few, so poor workmanship is missed, and we suffer the consequences: on the road surface and in our Council Tax as the ultimate repair cost will be borne by HCC. More money spent checking utilities' work would result in better road surfaces from day one.

This year has seen a massive decline in repair of other safety features too. Warning signs and directions on major junctions are twisted, broken and fallen to the ground. White lining at junctions has worn away. A 'report it' post to www.hants.gov.uk provides a reference number but rarely provides the comfort of a completion date. The public appeal to me for help - and sometimes it works!

Recently, a team was sent to clear a large sump; a kind of drain in Sutton Scotney. I have chased this work every month since last summer: the team turned up in March. They sat in their van. A resident asked why they hadn't got started. They replied that they'd discovered frog spawn and small fish and were waiting for the Environment Agency to make a call? You couldn't make this up.... If only they'd done their job in October!

Clr Jackie Porter 07973 696 085
jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk

The Itchen Valley Quiz No.45

1. How much 'wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood'? By what name is a woodchuck better known?
2. Dodoma is the capital of which African nation?
3. Thinking of Minneapolis, what do the initials ICE mean?
4. What links the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty?
5. Who said "Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not." And in what context?
6. Where might you find a wild aesculapian snake in England?
7. What musical instruments were played by (a) Denis Brain, (b) Jacqueline du Prey, (c) Myra Hess (d) Sir James Galway and (e) Alison Balsom?
8. Through which major European city does the River Neva run?
9. On 15 February this year the following item appeared in the Sunday Telegraph: "Palmeston. Diplocat extraordinaire passed away peacefully in Bermuda on 12 Feb" It was followed by an X account entry of No.10 from Larry with the words "Farewell dear old Friend". Who are we talking about?
10. What is the approximate speed of the "skeleton" in the Winter Olympics?

John Lang

[Answers on page 38](#)

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From the Parish Council

Please note some forthcoming important dates and some changes of dates. In chronological order these are:

The April Full Council meeting has been moved from 2 April to 9 April. This is to avoid a clash with Easter. The venue and start time will still be Easton Village Hall at 7pm.

The Annual Parish Meeting is on 23 April in Easton Village Hall, starting at 7pm. It will start with a talk on the M3 Junction 9 Project, followed by the formal meeting. That gives the opportunity to ask questions on the project, on all other aspects of the Parish Council's work over the past year and what we are planning for the future.

Due to 7 May being a local government election day the May Full Council

meeting and official Annual Meeting of the Council (sometimes incorrectly called the AGM) will take place on 14 May in Easton Village Hall starting at 7pm.

On Monday 18 May in Martyr Worthy Village Hall starting at 7pm we will be holding a Crime Prevention meeting. Our Police Community Support Officer will be coming to meet with residents and answer their questions.

The Men's Shed in Alresford have worked at speed and the bus shelter, formerly opposite the Martyr Worthy War Memorial, has been taken apart and rebuilt. It is now in sections awaiting completion of the foundation slab. Once that is ready, the sections of the shelter will be brought back and put together on the south side of the B3047, where it is hope to be of greater use to those waiting for a bus than it was in its previous location.

Having finished that project they have agreed to renovate the notice board on the wall of the Cricketers in Easton. It has been in a very poor state for far too long. There will therefore be a short length of time when it will be missing. But remember there are four other boards located in the Valley, the main one on which official notices are posted is by the bus shelter opposite the Village Hall in Itchen Abbas. We all have to be grateful and thank the volunteers at the Men's Shed for the help they have given and are giving us.

One other restoration project underway is the finger post near the Village Hall in Itchen Abbas. The former post was destroyed when a motorist drove their car into it. A new replica post is on order and, complete with the restored finial from the old post, will be put back in place at the end of April or the

beginning of May.

Traffic problems, mainly but not entirely due to Junction 9 work, continue. The main causes are drivers ignoring the official diversion signs and relying on satnav which takes no account of roads being narrow and unsuitable for heavy two-way traffic. We are still pursuing this with Hampshire County Council Highways. A delegation will be going to the next meeting of Hampshire County Council in May. Unfortunately Parish Councillors are not permitted to be part of delegations. However three residents have volunteered, who will be briefed. A maximum of four is allowed so if you wish to join the other three please let Cllr David Wolfe or our Clerk know.

Another issue where we have been pressing for action for a long time is the Avington sewage project. Two spring times have now gone past where we were told it would have been completed but progress has been minimal. A letter has therefore been sent to the Chairman of Southern Water, with copies to our MP and others asking for information and action to complete this long overdue project. Receipt of the letter has been acknowledged but so far nothing else. Last but not least congratulations to Cllr Chris Jeffes who has received the Mayor of Winchester's Community Service Award for his work keeping an enormous number of footpaths clear. Last summer he cut over 37 kilometres of path using the ride on brush cutter and that was apart from other work on our Rights of Way with the Ramblers.

Hope to see you all at the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd April.

Patrick Appleby (IVPC Chairman)



Joyce Edgell 1936-2026



Joyce contributed so much to the local community and it was with great sadness that the Itchen Valley News reported her death at the age of 89 in last month's edition.

Joyce was born in Andover in 1936 and trained as a teacher in Weymouth before starting work at Wallop Primary School, followed by Sparsholt Primary School, and a short spell at Itchen Abbas School.

She met and married Tony Roberts in 1958 and they had two children before Tony died in 1964. This must have been a very challenging time for her but fortunately she met John Edgell and they married in 1966 having

another son.

Her other main role locally was as Clerk to Itchen Valley Parish Council for the best part of 10 years. She replied to an advertisement for a Clerk in this magazine and we were delighted to appoint her as she brought a great deal of enthusiasm and efficiency to her new role as well as a lot of local knowledge.

Apart from her family, three children and five grandchildren plus one great granddaughter, her main interests were sporting - weekly tennis at Winchester Tennis Club, golf at South Winchester, where she was ladies' Captain, and swimming, but she also enjoyed many and wide-ranging holidays with her family, gardening and birdwatching.

Her funeral was at Test Valley Crematorium on 4 March.

Alison Matthews

Ponda meets the King

Julian Ellis-Brown, who was born and brought up in Abbots Worthy, attended Hampton Court Palace last week for the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) Annual Summit. on behalf of his company Ponda, There he joined 200+ CEOs from some of the world's leading organisations in finance, energy and materials to discuss how private markets can help move the dial on climate change.



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HRH King Charles III (who founded SMI) also attended, and spoke to Julian about his biomaterials company and how we might one day be getting materials from regenerated wetland ecosystems.

Ponda worked with a Somerset florist to create their display stand, which reflects the wetland environments



where bullrushes grow - which they harvest for their sustainable material, BioPuff.

Julian is a co-founder and CEO of Ponda, a biomaterials company developing novel sustainable textiles from plants grown in regenerated wetland environments. Their first material, a plant based insulation BioPuff, has been used by Berghaus, Stella McCartney and Dover Street Market.

Julian Ellis-Brown

<https://www.ponda.bio/>

Riddles and Jokes

What can you break, even if you never pick it up or touch it?

Silence

What gets wetter the more it dries?

A towel

What did the ocean say to the beach?

Nothing, it just waved.

What did the cheese say in the mirror?

"Halloumi!"

Phoebe Ladeinde Age 10



Easter nests

225g/8oz chocolate – dark or milk depending on how sweet you like it.

2 tbsp golden syrup

50g/2oz butter

75g/2¾oz cornflakes or Rice Krispies

36 mini chocolate eggs

Line a 12-hole fairy cake tin with paper cases.

Melt the chocolate, golden syrup and butter in a bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water (do not let the base of the bowl touch the water). Stir the mixture occasionally until smooth.

Remove the bowl from the heat and gently stir in the cereal until it is coated in the chocolate.

Divide the mixture between the paper cases and press three chocolate eggs into the centre of each nest. Chill in the fridge for an hour, or until you can't wait any longer.

Helen Ellis Brown



Atlantic salmon

Atlantic salmon have one of the most remarkable life cycles in the natural world. Born in the clean gravels of rivers like the River Itchen, these powerful fish travel thousands of miles across the Atlantic Ocean before returning, often years later, to the very same stretch of river where they began life.

For thousands of years this migration has been part of the natural rhythm of the Itchen. Each year young salmon head out to sea, growing to adulthood in the North Atlantic before navigating their way back to the chalk streams of southern England. Their return is one of nature's most extraordinary journeys, guided by instinct and an ability to detect the unique chemical signature of their home river.

After returning from the ocean in winter, females dig shallow depressions in clean gravel known as redds, where they lay thousands of eggs. Redds appear as lighter patches of gravel with a shallow dip and mound. The eggs remain buried in the gravel until they hatch in late spring. However, these nests are fragile and easily damaged by disturbance in the river such as wading, wild swimming, paddling, and dogs entering the water. Any activity that disturbs the riverbed can crush the eggs or compact the gravel around them, cutting off the oxygen they need to survive.

Members of the public can help protect this vulnerable stage in the salmon's life cycle by keeping to the riverbanks and staying out of the River Itchen.

Atlantic salmon are uniquely adapted to their home rivers. Chalk stream

salmon populations are genetically distinct, shaped over thousands of years by the conditions of the rivers they return to. The River Itchen is one of only six chalk streams in England that still supports wild Atlantic salmon.

However, their numbers have fallen dramatically. In 2022, just 133 adult salmon were recorded returning to spawn, and numbers remain critically low. This decline has prompted conservation organisations, including Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, to launch the Itchen Salmon Delivery Plan, a coordinated effort to restore habitats, improve water quality and remove barriers to migration.

hiwwt.org.uk/join-today or call 01489 774408.

Helen Skelton-Smith

Communications

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Helen.Skelton-Smith@hiwwt.org.uk

Co-ordinators wanted

Alresford & District Voluntary Care Group (ADVCG) is looking for a volunteer to join the Co-ordinator Team – these are the volunteers who answer the central telephone line which people ring when they need help with transport to their medical appointments; the line is diverted to the landline or mobile of the duty Co-ordinator, so it can all be done from home.

Co-ordinators carry out a week manning the telephone line on a rota basis, once every seven weeks or so. Details of requested journeys are recorded on our web-based computer system, and the Co-

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 What?Words: items,liquid,clues

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ordinator then allocates the journey to one of our pool of approximately seventy volunteer drivers.

Co-ordinators carry out a very important and rewarding role for ADVCG, as they are the 'bridge' between members of the public who need assistance, and our volunteer drivers so if you can spare some time, please either email us at alresfordvolcare@gmail.com or contact David Cooper, Chairman, on 07766 406704

Easton & Martyr Worthy Safari Supper 2026

Saturday 16 May

We really hope that new arrivals to our villages and people who have not attended before will join us as it is a great way to get to know your neighbours.

For those who don't know the idea of the Safari Supper is that participants travel from house to house for three separate courses meeting different people at each course. We shall then all meet up together for the grand finale at The Oak House, Church Lane, Easton, the home of Judy Bishop who has kindly agreed to welcome us at the end of the evening.

For the event to work most people need to host a course although first timers are usually exempt! The donation price is £25 per head again this year and at least £10 of this will be a much-needed donation to the fabric fund of St Mary's Church. For those who cater the reimbursement for each person will be Starters £4 Mains £5 Desserts £3. The remaining

£3 will go towards the finale and administration costs.

Please use the application form below to make your booking **Applications close on Friday 8 May**. Your route and any reimbursement due will be sent out during the week commencing 10 May.

We very much hope to see you on 16 May.

Terry and Anna McGowan
01962 779350 or 07702 742950

APPLICATION FORM

Name

Address

Phone

Email

I/we can cater for (including me/us)

I/we can offer starter/main/dessert/
any (circle your choice)

I/we accept full legal liability for our actions and absolve the organisers from any responsibility

Please use the application form to make your booking and either send by post with a cheque made payable to T McGowan to Wincroft, Easton, Winchester, SO21 1ER or transfer your payment to the account in the name of T F McGowan: Sort code 20-97-01 acc. no: 20631361 and return the completed application by email to annamcgowan1@aol.com

Answers to Quiz 45 on Page 29

1. A ground hog.
2. Tanzania.
3. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
4. They are both iconic late 19th century French-designed metal structures, with the Statue of Liberty's internal iron support framework engineered by France's Gustave Eiffel who also built the Eiffel Tower in 1899.
5. This monologue was spoken by Caliban in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*.
6. They can be found in the vicinity of London's Regent canal, .They are not venomous.
7. Denis Brain – French Horn.
Jacqueleine du Prey – Cello.
Myra Hess – Piano.
James Galway – Flute.
Alison Balsom – Trumpet.
8. St Petersburg, Russia.
9. Palmeston had been the Foreign Office's chief mouser. Larry is the No.10 Downing Street cat with whom he was rumoured to have had a long running feud
10. 90 mph. Great Britain won two Gold Medals in this year's Skeleton competition in the Winter Olympic games

Local monthly information

Collections: Usually Tuesdays for Easton and, Avington, and Wednesdays for Abbots Worthy, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy.

Please check your calendar for actual dates or sign up to the Council reminder service

Hampshire Market in Winchester Second and last Sundays of every month, 9am - 2pm.

Full Parish Council Meeting: Next full council meeting is at 7 pm on 14 May.

Bus information



67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

To Winchester:

Monday to Friday

Sch 8:20 NSch 8:23

9:23 12:43 15:43 17:23

Saturday 08:23 11:23 14:23 17:23

From Winchester bus station

Mon- Fri 10.20 13.20 15.00 16.55 17.50

Saturday 9.00 12.00 15.00 17.50

To Alresford:

Monday to Friday

10:39 13:39 15:19 17:14 18:09

Saturday: 09:19 12:19 15:19 18:09

From Alresford Perrins school

Mon- Fri 8.11/14 9.14 12.34 15.34 17.14

Saturday 8.14 11.14 14.14 17.14

No Sunday or bank holiday service.

Key: Sch School days only

NSch School holidays only. All times shown are at Itchen Abbas. Times are 5 minutes later (or earlier) at Easton



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